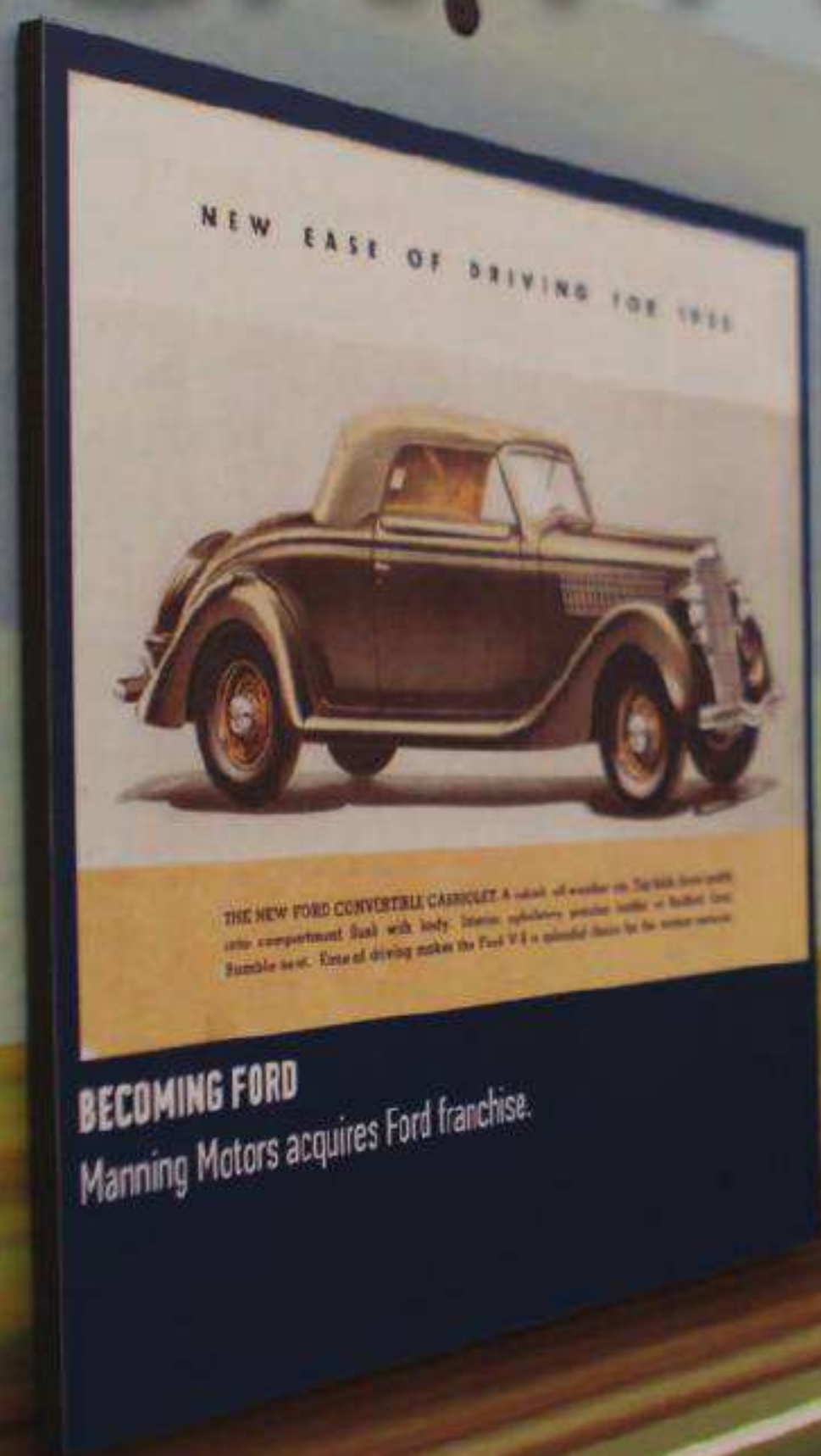




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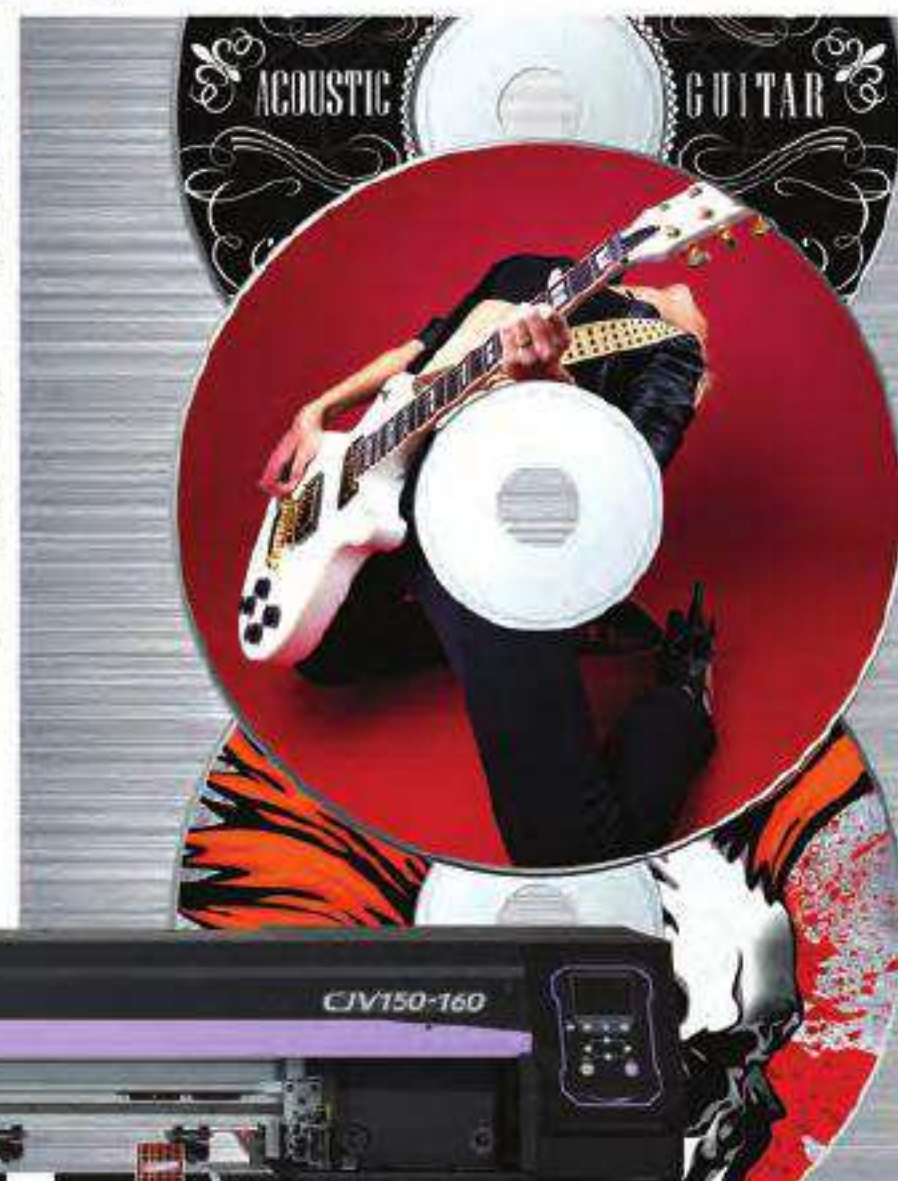
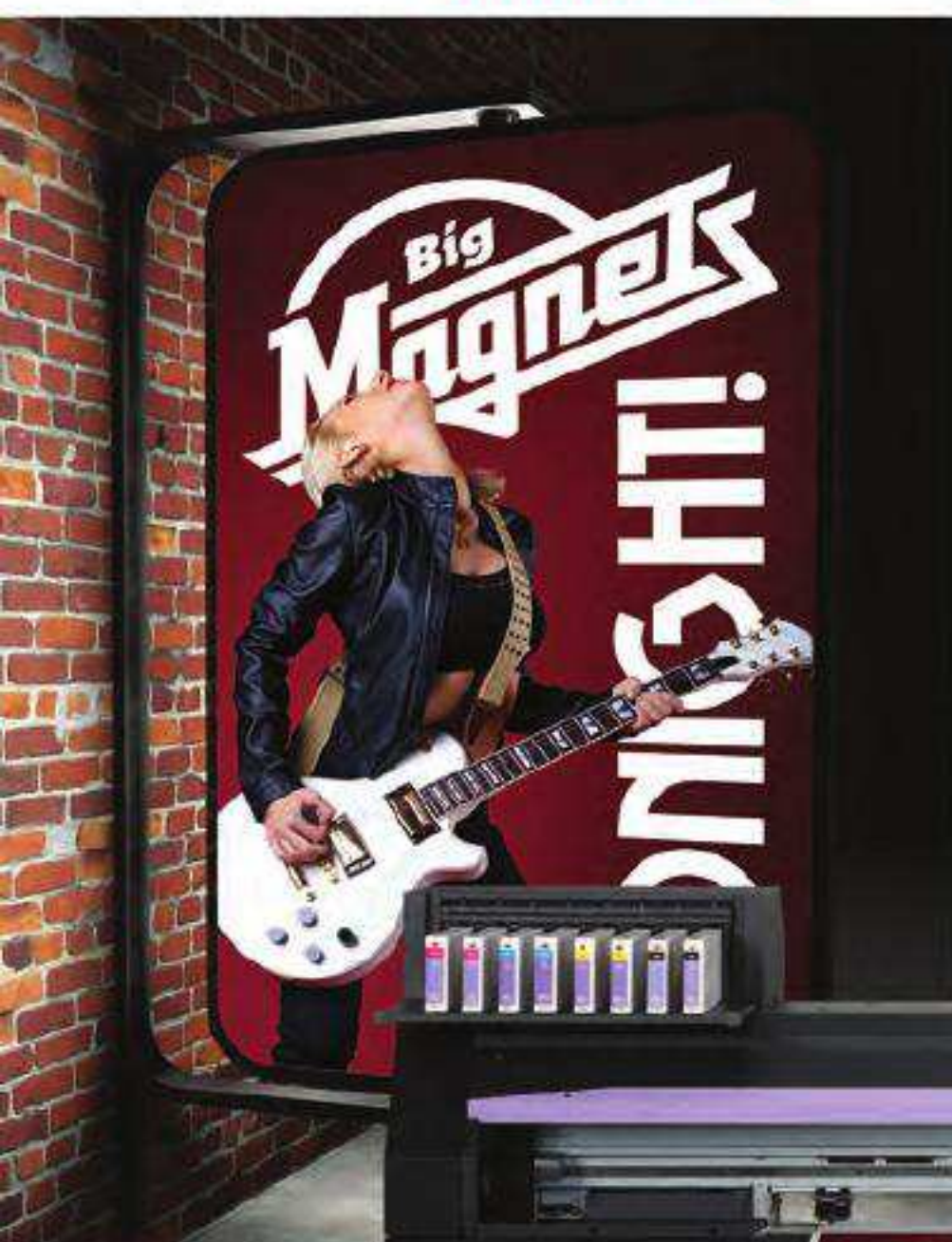
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Signshop.com

Check out our Industry Resources page for white papers on topics such as managing millennials, liquid laminates, and creative sign designs.

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A historical moment featured on the Speeding Through Time display at Manning Ford in DeKalb, Illinois.

Photo: OC Imageworks.



MARCH 2016

MARCH 10-12: The Southern States Sign Association's annual conference takes place at the Holiday Inn in Charlotte, North Carolina. (southernstatessigns.org)

APRIL 2016

APRIL 20-23: The ISA International Sign Expo returns to the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. (signs.org)

APRIL 26-28: LIGHTFAIR International, the world's largest annual architectural and commercial lighting tradeshow and conference, will occur at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California. (lightfair.com)

JUNE 2016

JUNE 9-11: The 2016 SEGDC Conference is scheduled to take place at the Westin Seattle in Seattle, Washington. (segd.org)

JULY 2016

JULY 28-30: The Mid South Sign Association's Annual Meeting & Tradeshow happens at the Beau Rivage Resort & Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi. (midsouthsignassociation.org)



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The outlook appears rosier for small businesses.

Think Big About Smaller Clients

Social media once again proved to be a valuable content delivery system, as I recently found myself drawn to a viral post on our newsfeed.

This link celebrated the rise and lamented the disappearance of five-and-dime-type stores across the retail landscape. It presented a rose-colored, time capsule look at these now-defunct shopping destinations.

If you're of a certain age, chances are good that you probably remember these businesses that were a common fixture in many blossoming downtowns of the twentieth-century (as well as a discount-oriented stepping stone between bigger department stores and smaller mom-and-pop specialty shops). Their names are permanent fixtures along Memory Lane: Woolworth's, McCrory's, Ben Franklin, and G.C. Murphy, for example.

I still have some fond memories myself of childhood trips to these five-and-dimes. I mean, back in the day, where else could my dad buy hardware tools, my mom purchase dress print patterns, and I spend my allowance for a Kenner Chewbacca action figure all during the same visit?

Of course, these stores could never adapt to Father Time and the public's changing taste, so these discount dinosaurs were eventually shoved aside for a then-new corporate discount shopping experience—the Kmart's, the WalMarts, the Targets, etc.

As I was relishing the slides of these five-and-dimes returned to their living, breathing Kodak® glory (as well as checking out their now-retro-cool signage), it dawned on me that, just like their even-bigger successors, these stores were supposedly the bane of the specialty mom-and-pop small business owners.

And while small businesses still survived as the

five-and-dimes went out to tend to dodo birds, even amidst today's retail landscape of corporatized colors and logos, small businesses are now a more attractive option than ever.

The results of a survey conducted last November by Allstate insurance company and *USA Today* found that starting a small business is now as good a time as any. This positive outlook is attributed to "the benefits of new technology, a 'generally improving' economy, the greater availability of capital, and more favorable lending conditions."

In fact, 61 percent of respondent owners said they were doing well, and 80 percent indicated that, over the past three months, their business grew the same (or even more) than it did over the previous year period.

So unlike five-and-dimes, you just can't keep a good small business down—good news for sign makers able to cater to this market. Already a recent article in the *New York Times* detailed how smaller custom shops were attracted to using old-school hand painting.

And you'll find other examples in this month's issue demonstrating how you can get involved here. On page 10, we'll show how a sign maker has created a big niche for himself by crafting cost-effective dimensional signage for smaller, independent businesses inside malls in his area.

Remember how five-and-dimes couldn't keep up with changing times? Our feature on page 54 will show how a full-service sign shop sold a digital display to a smaller independent business that realized it had to upgrade its on-premise signage or go home forever.

The key for small business owners and sign makers is learning how to adapt. With your capabilities, you should be able to help this again-rising market avoid becoming a future slideshow of rose-colored nostalgia. [SB](#)

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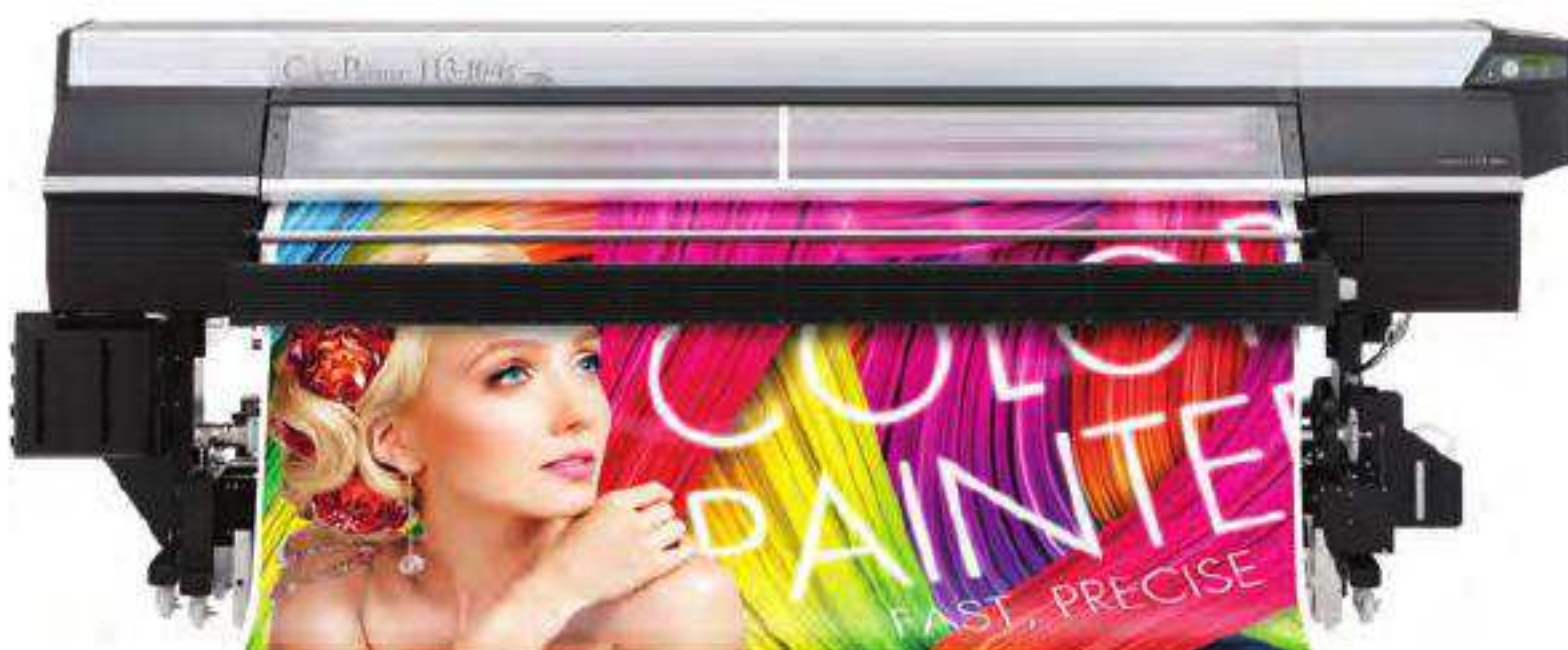
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Creating Big Looks for Small Business Mall Storefronts

Statesville, North Carolina—Shopping mall signage often is associated with national retail stores that pour thousands of dollars into supporting a corporate-designed brand image.

While much of that storefront signage is designed for installation inside enclosed mall spaces, these signs often are fabricated with the kinds of sturdy materials designed to weather outdoor conditions.

For small, independent businesses, this type of signage is out of reach. At the same time, mall managers still expect these stores to present a professional image.

Greg Scott, owner of GsWorx (GsWorx.com) in New Philadelphia, Ohio, meets the needs of both independent business

owners and mall management by creating cost-effective dimensional storefront signage with lightweight-yet-durable materials, including Gatorfoam® graphic display board by 3A Composites USA.

"For these small businesses, typical channel letter metal signs are overkill," said Scott. "Ninety-five percent of those signs are made to be installed outside and can start at \$5,000 and up.

"I can create a professional brand image for these businesses with a dimensional sign that costs less than half that amount."

When Scott started his business a decade ago, one of his first customers was New

Towne Mall in New Philadelphia, which is owned and operated by the WP Glimcher retail real-estate investment company.

At that time, mall management had no requirements for signage, according to Scott, who said that some seasonal tenants had started installing banners across storefronts. In response, mall management issued requirements that all storefront signage must be at least two inches thick and

The Gatorfoam sign for Sophie's Cafe (below right) impressed mall owner WP Glimcher so much that he shared the design with other malls, and soon GsWorx was busy making signs for all types of shops.



PHOTOS: GSWORX

According to Scott, an entire Gatorfoam sign can weigh less than ten pounds, which aids in installation. He can install an entire eight-foot sign using one hand.



include three-dimensional lettering.

Scott thought that Gatorfoam (which consists of polystyrene foam bonded between two layers of wood-fiber veneer laminate) would serve as a more cost-effective solution for creating these types of signs. "I can create a heavy-looking, thick sign that's easy to handle during installation," says Scott.

For storefront signs, Scott regularly either fabricates several layers of one-inch-thick Gatorfoam, supplied by the Cleveland branch of distributor N. Glantz & Son, or combines Gatorfoam lettering with other materials such as acrylic, metal, and HDU. He cuts the Gatorfoam with standard woodworking tools and paints exposed edges to "create a nice, finished look."

Mall management was so impressed with Scott's initial signage created with Gatorfoam for New Towne Mall's Seattle Cafe that photos of this graphic display were sent to other malls owned by WP Glimcher.

"It didn't look like any other mall signs, [and] I started getting calls from mall managers in other states," said Scott, who studied visual communications at The Art Institute of Pittsburgh and often develops illustrated iconic characters to help brand these small businesses.

Scott has created a niche market focused on storefront mall signage for independent businesses with clients located in the

Columbus, Ohio area as well as in Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

"I've marketed my services to malls with recommended signage requirements," he says, adding that mall management must approve layouts for all signage. "When they get a new non-franchise tenant, I'm the first contact."

Scott has created a niche market

focused on storefront mall signage for independent businesses. He creates the storefront signs from several layers of Gatorfoam, which he often combines with other materials. The signage is cost-effective and easy to handle during installation. It also provides companies with a professional branding image.



ISA Sign Expo Launches Incentive Program

Alexandria, Virginia—A daily drawing, featuring prizes of \$5,000 to \$10,000, will boost the incentive for sign and graphics professionals to leave ISA International Sign Expo 2016 in Orlando, Florida with a new printer.

The daily drawing will include the names of those who purchase qualifying print equipment of \$20,000 or more directly from a program sponsor or sponsor-authorized distributor during ISA Sign Expo 2016.

Participating sponsors are: AGFA, Canon, EFI, Epson, Esko, HP, Mimaki, Mutoh, OKI Data Americas, Roland DGA, and Tubelite, Inc.

The daily drawing will include \$5,000 each on April 21 and April 22, while \$10,000 will be given away on Saturday, April 23.

"Many of our print purchasers tell us that they use ISA International Sign Expo to finalize their decisions after seeing the products in action on the show floor," said ISA President and CEO Lori Anderson. "This drawing will be a nice windfall for the winners, but all



ISA attendees who purchase printers have a chance to win a daily drawing.



who take home new equipment are winners when it comes to growing their businesses."

For a complete list of rules, log on to www.signexpo.org/wideformat.



The Big Game on Display

Santa Clara, California—The biggest pro football game of the year kicked off at Levi's® Stadium on February 7, and video displays at each end zone paired with additional displays throughout the venue wowed fans as the Denver Broncos and the Carolina Panthers faced off for football supremacy.

The south end zone featured the stadium's most innovative audio-visual combination using freeform LED elements in an acoustically transparent façade over the speaker system, which provided additional video display space for team-branded content and advertising.

Daktronics had nine technicians on

site for the entire game. These field engineers and control experts were planning and staging the whole week leading up to the game—including placing spare parts at each display for increased game-day response time, pre-event system checks, and running a fully simulated game on the primary and back-up systems to ensure everything was ready for the main event.

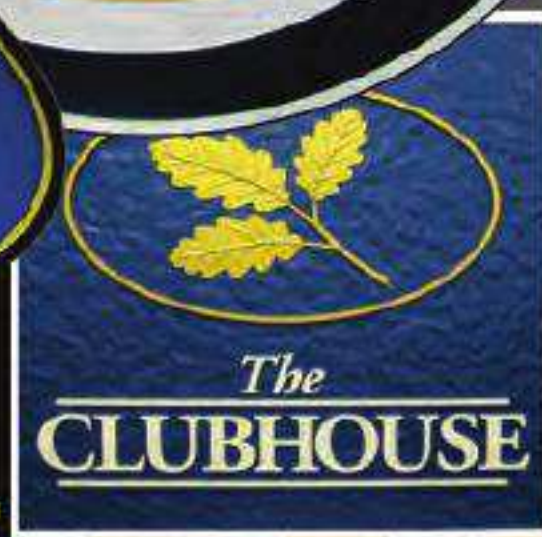
Levi's Stadium showcases multiple video displays in the seating bowl featuring 13HD pixel layouts. Meanwhile two 10-millimeter SMD LED ribbon displays on the exterior welcome fans to the stadium, and two large displays were installed in 2015 that face outward from the venue but can also be seen as fans walk around the concourse areas.

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DIGITAL PRINTING EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES



New Océ Arizona Series UV Flatbed Printers are Designed for Mid-volume Print Producers

Océ Arizona 1200 Series printers from Canon USA, Inc. combine Océ VariaDot grayscale piezoelectric printing technology with a true flatbed architecture for high print quality across a broad range of applications. In response to customer needs, the new printers are offered in three different configurations and two different size formats. Delivering superb print quality on rigid media and objects up to two inches thick and up to 8-by-10 feet, these printers allow for printing on rigid media or objects (including odd-shaped, heavy, smooth, or pre-cut media), printing multiple times in perfect registration for high-density or textured applications, or printing oversized images tiled across multiple boards. The new printers feature four-, six-, or eight-color channels. **800/OK-CANON; usa.canon**



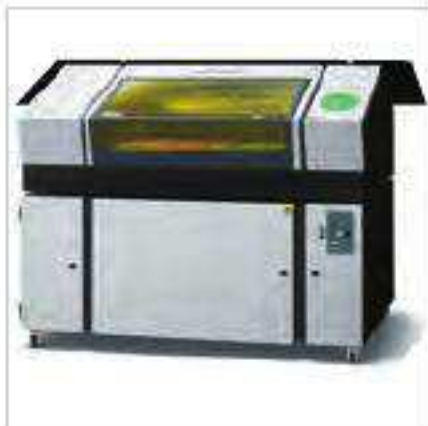
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Check Out the Refocused Look for Novusimaging.com

The Web site for Novus Imaging has been completely redesigned to provide the company's end-users and partner organizations with up-to-date, easy-to-find information on all printers and inks manufactured by Novus Imaging. The redesign reflects Novus Imaging's new look and vision for growth and expansion in the wide format inkjet industry. The new site includes extensive product information to help customers and partners understand Novus's complete range of printing solutions. Technical data, application shots, and videos work together to provide a detailed overview of Novus Imaging's capabilities across a wide range of industry applications. The site's refreshed and simplified look—combined with enhanced content, improved search functionality, and optimization for mobile devices—allows customers to get to know Novus better by interacting with Novus Imaging online. **603/250-1516; novusimaging.com**



Roland DGA Releases Larger, Faster Benchtop LEF-300 UV Flatbed Printer

To accommodate greater quantities and larger-sized items, Roland DGA's VersaUV LEF-300's printing area has been expanded to 30 inches wide-by-13 inches long—50 percent more than the LEF-20. With four printheads and two UV-LED lamps, the LEF-300 enables bi-directional printing approximately 60 percent faster than the LEF-20. The number of white and clear (gloss) ink nozzles have been doubled for faster printing, increased density and opacity, and quicker build-up of multiple layers for three-dimensional textures. The LEF-300 utilizes new EUV4 ink (Roland's proprietary CYMK, white, and clear ECO-UV inks). Users can print on a vast array of substrates like PET, ABS, and polycarbonate; soft materials such as TPU and leather; and a host of three-dimensional items. The LEF-300's built-in vacuum table helps hold thin and soft materials in place, allowing for easier job setup and eliminating time-consuming errors. Users will also appreciate the included BOFA air filtration system, which ensures proper ventilation while also serving as a stand and storage unit for fixtures and supplies. Meanwhile the LEF-300 comes equipped with Roland's new VersaWorks® Dual software RIP. rolanddga.com

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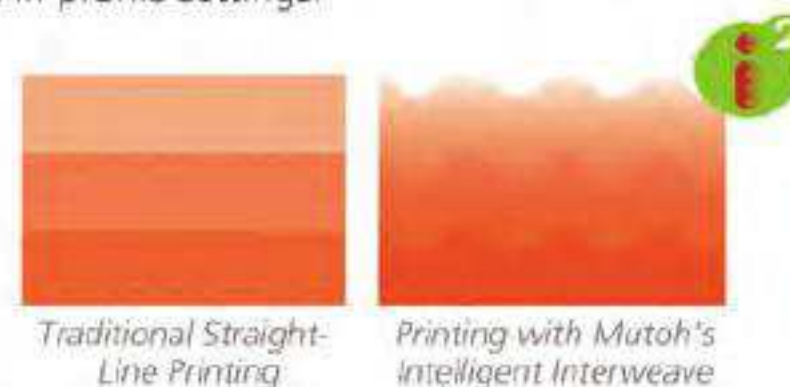
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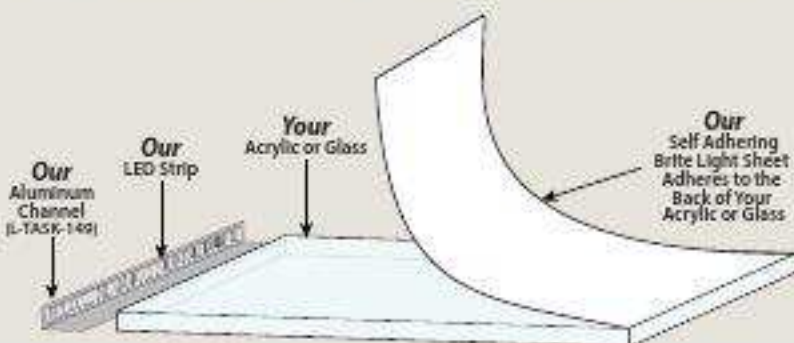


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Go to Web: Catalog 43, Page Index-11



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Go to Web: Catalog 43, Page R-87 ~ R-88



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Brushing Up on Brushed Aluminum

*Creating
brushed
aluminum
laminated
dimensional
letters.*

I recently found myself afforded the pleasure of once again creating a high-end appearance for one of my clients with a shop-made set of laminated aluminum letters (*Photo 1*). The letters were going to be used to identify an information center section of the Clear Brook City Municipal District main office.

To begin, I laid an aluminum sheet face down and saturated its surface with 3M™ Hi-Strength 90 Spray Adhesive, since it's a strong, contact-type adhesive for heavy-duty bonding.

After letting the adhesive work for a couple of minutes on the aluminum, I next selected a 3/8-inch piece of smooth and very clean PVC sheet. I placed the 0.50-inch white PVC sheet face down onto the aluminum and added some weight to guarantee a permanent bond.

Next I cut the vinyl lettering and adhered them to the front surface of the brushed aluminum laminated sheet.

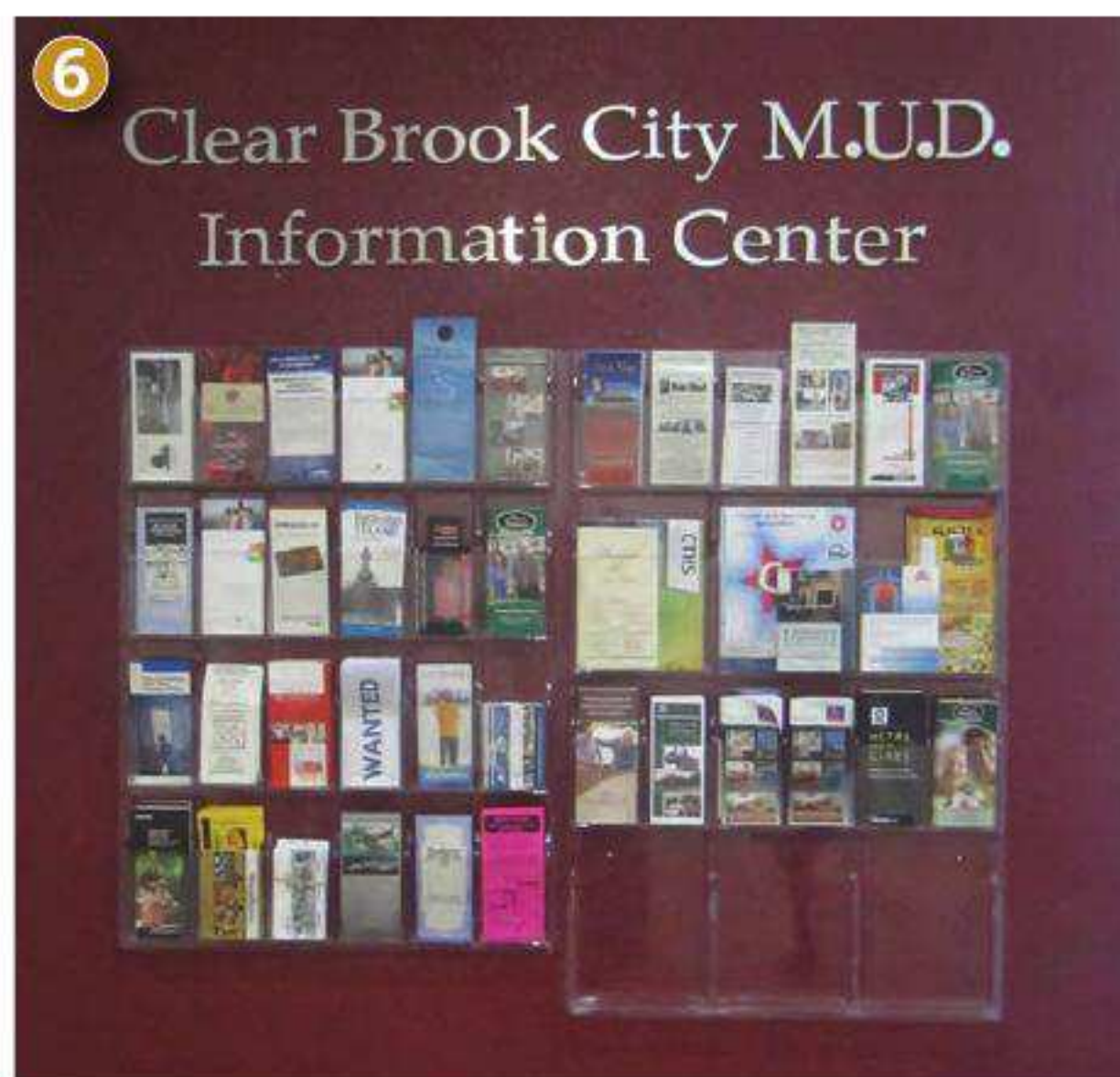
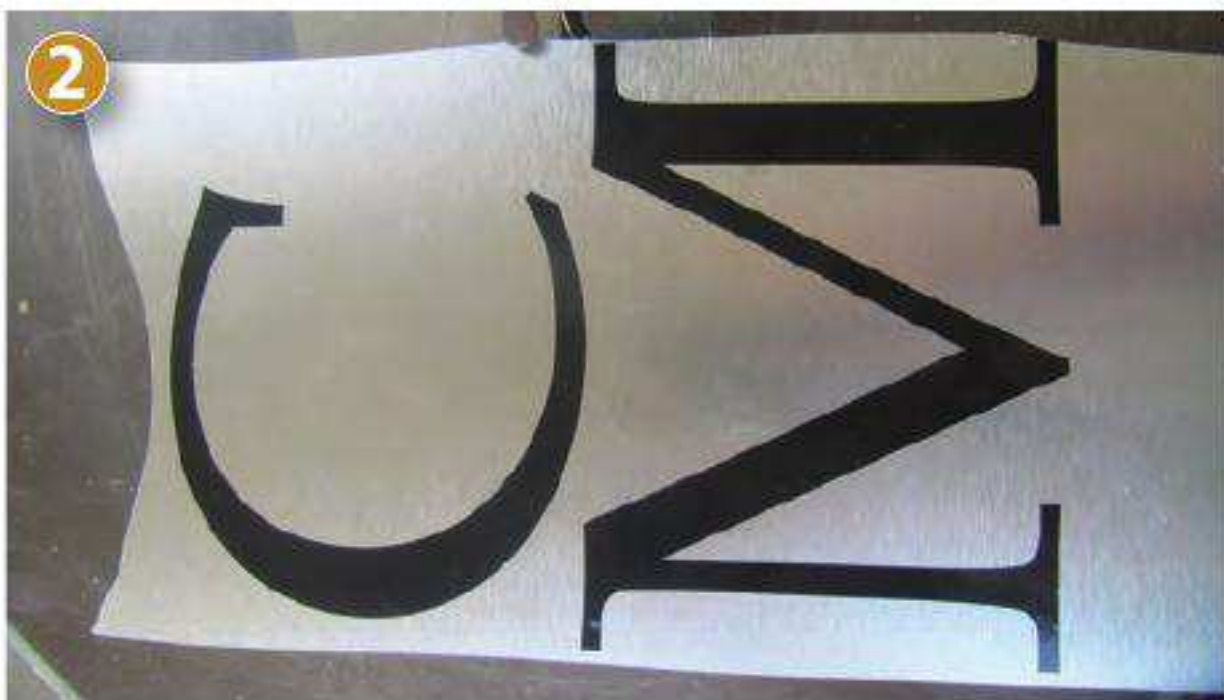
From there, I cut the brushed aluminum laminate into individual letters with our scroll saw (*Photo 2*).

Now this portion of the project was critical, because I wanted a very clean appearance along the cut lines. By taking my time and carefully cutting the laminated brushed aluminum sheet, the letters came out flawless. In fact, I was really impressed because it looked as if these letters had actually been cut on a CNC router.

Next I sanded each letter along its edges with sandpaper and emery boards (*Photo 3*).

Working carefully, I removed all the sharp edges from the aluminum laminate letters. Be careful here. Nothing can ruin your day more





than a few aluminum cuts on your fingers. Wearing lightweight leather gloves will save your delicate skin, and you'll also save money by avoiding the Band-Aids®.

For quick burr removal, I loaded my Dremel™ tool with a medium-grit sanding drum and carefully rounded over the sharp edges a little at a time. Don't work too fast here, or you could ruin a letter or two. Slow and steady and light pressure will give you the professional look you want.

Once I had cut and sanded all the edges of the laminated letters, I laid them down on a cloth towel and painted them with silver paint. Some of the letters, such as a small "r," needed a second coating after sanding (Photo 4).

I then took our X-ACTO® knife and cut small sections of double-sided 3M™ Red Release Liner Tape and adhered them to the backside of all the letters.

After doing this, it was time to get ready for the road trip to install the letters.

Before adhering these letters, I first wiped down the wall with a damp towel. After this had finished drying, I applied

the letter pattern to the wall (Photo 5). I cut the pattern horizontally so I could level one-third of the pattern.

From there, I began removing the red liner tape from the letters, one at a time.

It's important to adhere your letters from the top line, left to right, as well as the second line of copy. Again be careful because the tape can ruin a wall if it's placed where it shouldn't be placed. Slow and steady will keep you smiling!

Once I had all the dimensional letters attached to the wall, I took a moment to stand back and admire my work (Photo 6). (Note: Always take your camera to capture your signage success.)

Now what client of yours could use a set of brushed aluminum letters such as these? I bet you can think of several established customers, so get busy! [SBI](#)

Mark Roberts is the owner of The InterSign Group in Houston, Texas and has been creating beautiful signage for thirty-eight years.



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QR Code Generation

*Are QR Codes
a window of
opportunity
for marketers?*

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a QR or “Quick Reference” code could be worth a million. That’s because it provides the viewer with a doorway from a printed medium to unlimited interactive online content.

Applications include incorporating the QR codes in traditional print ads as well as direct mail advertising. Other applications include traditional signage, wide format P-O-P posters, tradeshow and museum exhibits, and window graphics and store window displays.

Using QR codes and related technologies, such as Augmented Reality, allows businesses to deliver their current online messaging to a mobile audience and engage shoppers in real time, which can stimulate impulse sales. I had also thought that there was great promise in the use of QR codes on packaging, linking the code to instructional manuals, technical bulletins, or YouTube “how-to” videos.

The \$64,000 question: Will consumers today

use QR codes?

One huge stumbling block to marketing success is that, while most shoppers have seen QR codes in stores, most of them don’t have a clue about what they are and how to use them.

Fewer than 20 percent of smartphone owners have downloaded the app required for scanning. A very high percentage of those tend to be rich, tech-savvy guys, which may not correspond to your target audience.

If that wasn’t a problem, the other major issue is that most of those in the know won’t take the time to whip out their cell phones and scan the codes.

Inappropriate use of QR codes has also turned off some of those consumers who have scanned them. Who wants to scan a code only to be directed to a crass commercial message?

Before you pass judgment and proclaim that QR codes are dead, let me describe what they are and how they could better be used.



What are QR Codes?

A QR Code is a type of barcode. If you have downloaded the correct app for your smartphone, you can scan QR codes.

By scanning the code, your phone links to online content—a Web site, YouTube video, interactive game, augmented reality experience, PDF, or discount coupon.

How are QR Codes used in marketing?

Two-dimensional print media is static and constrained by mechanics such as size, as well as by production costs. Linking to an online environment shatters any messaging boundaries, making your message dynamic and interactive.

By connecting to online content, a marketer can provide potential customers with much more product information at a significantly lower cost per impression. The key is to provide real informational value to the consumer.

The QR code should link to a landing page that is relevant to the messaging in the promotion rather than to a non-specific Web site homepage. The landing page must also be formatted for ease of view on a mobile device.

How are QR Codes used in wide format applications?

By providing new avenues for communication, QR codes are ideal for P-O-P posters, tradeshow displays, and on museum exhibits because there is limited space for messages. Used in outdoor applications such as signage, these codes should be positioned so consumers can easily scan them.

Fleet graphics and outdoor billboards may not be good candidates for QR codes because it may be next to impossible to scan a code when either the viewer or the viewed is travelling at high speeds. What's more, marketers don't need to compound the problems that we already have with distracted drivers.

How can you create a QR Code?

Converting a URL is easy. Better yet, at many QR code generator sites, it's free and only takes seconds.

Once you've created the QR code for

yourself or one of your customers, just insert it into your layout and print it.

When incorporating a QR code into one of your layouts, keep in mind the overall size must be at least one-by-one-inch. Smartphones will be unable to scan anything smaller.



Also be sure to provide plenty of white space around the code so that it's noticed and that the surrounding area doesn't interfere with the scan.

While you aren't limited to black-and-white images, they are the easiest

to scan. If you use colors, make sure that there's high contrast between the highlight and shadow.

Effective advertising usually includes a call to action. The same holds true for QR codes.

If you want customers to scan the QR code, provide them with a benefit enticing enough for them to take action. An in-store P-O-P display may incorporate the phrase: "Scan this Code for a 15% Off Coupon."

Test, don't guess.

Prior to full production, print a prototype and test the QR code to make sure that it's easy to scan on a variety of smartphones using different apps. Also perform test scans at a number of distances and from several angles.

After launching a promotion, be sure to track the success of the program by recording how many consumers scanned the QR code and responded to your call to action—whether it was a purchase at a discount store, participation in a survey, a YouTube viewing, or a Facebook like. [SBI](#)

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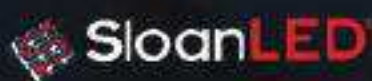
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Preparing for **NEC 2017**

Some notable changes are coming to the next National Electric Code.

The National Electric Code (NEC) right this very moment may be sitting on a desk somewhere or bookmarked on a computer. But how much does it play into the day-to-day work of an electric sign company? The answer: Perhaps more than you know.

Many communities and states adopt the NEC as their local standards. So when an electrical inspector shows up to inspect your latest sign installation, they're relying on standards defined by the NEC.

That's why the International Sign Association (ISA) has a dedicated team of volunteers who work closely to influence NEC regulations throughout the code cycle process. ISA staff and volunteers also work on similar projects

with other code-setting bodies, such as with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and UL.

All of these groups have a tremendous impact on the day-to-day operations of the sign and graphics industry—and it's important for us to be involved.

Our overarching goals often align: We want to create and install safe products. NEC wants to ensure that electrical products are safe as well. However our specific knowledge of sign components can help them better understand the practical implications of proposed changes.

NEC revisions occur every three years. We're in the midst of a code cycle currently, with new changes coming out in 2017. We anticipate several fairly significant changes in a few key areas.



PHOTO: JORDAN UDITSKY AND MIGUEL RESENDEZ OF THE MERGED AMERICAN SIGN FACTORY AND SURE LIGHT SIGN COMPANY.

Labeling is required.

In the past, a sign worker could tell an electrical inspector that he was using compliant (Listed) products.

Now that component is required to include a label. This is the equivalent of a math teacher who wants the student to show how he arrived at the answer, not just that he had the correct one.

We've seen this shift occur with other organizations recently too: Trust but verify.

The label will help the electrical inspector trust that the component meets standards. It's no longer acceptable to point the inspector to a listing. They'll want to see the label too.

The new labeling will apply to ballasts, transformers, and electronic power supplies; power sources; and electrode connections.

In practical application, it means that sign and graphics companies will need to ensure that their supplies include these labels. With a year's advance notice, manufacturers should have ample time to include these labels, and sign companies should be able to use up any existing stock of label-less components between now and 2017.

Photovoltaic-powered signs make a first appearance.

While photovoltaic (solar-powered) signs aren't a significant part of our industry, they will make their debut in the NEC 2017 edition. Its inclusion will help electrical inspectors better understand this type of sign and ensure that these products are safe.

If solar-powered signs grow, smart sign companies will come up to speed quickly on these 2017 requirements.

Secondary wiring gets a new look.

In the past, information related to secondary wiring of LED sign illumination systems has been presented in paragraph form. With the 2017 edition, it will be in a chart.

This may take a bit of time to get accustomed to finding the needed information, but essentially nothing has changed functionally.

At press time, this process is still not finalized. However it would take some-

thing significant to change these draft proposals, so we expect them to be adopted as they're outlined above.

The NEC code is important to the work that we do. It's also important that we work alongside these types of organizations, as they have a tremendous impact on our industry. [signs.org](http://www.signs.org)

If you have any concerns about the NEC or any other regulation, email david.hickey@signs.org.

The National Electric Code most likely plays a bigger role in the day-to-day work of your sign shop than you realize.

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History

in the making

A massive wall mural details the history of an auto dealership.

Brad Manning Ford in DeKalb, Illinois is a family-owned automobile dealership that has been servicing the area for ninety-five years. They recently added a brand-new auto display showroom to their existing facility, and the current owners wanted to use this space to play up their family history within the business, as well as their dedication to the DeKalb area.

The result is *Speeding Through Time*, a massive, multi-component wall mural featuring a sixty-one-foot width of vinyl, Eifel grilling between posts, and reproductions of photographs of Manning Ford's history and offerings.

Getting Up to Speed

The Manning family began this project by contacting Banner Up Signs (bannerupsigns.com), a sign production and installation shop in Sycamore, Illinois. Owner Jon Kuhn is very familiar with family businesses, as his father founded his company. He learned the family had only a history wall concept in mind but not much else.

Kuhn, in turn, reached out to OC Imageworks (ocimageworks.com) of DeKalb, Illinois, about getting involved in designing this high-speed project. (Note: Over the past four years, Banner Up Signs has partnered with OC Imageworks in printing, wrapping, and displays.)

In the early 2000s, OC Imageworks started out as a large format print company, but five years ago, they realized they could profit more by focusing on their expert design capabilities. So OC Imageworks then morphed strictly into creative

services (including video production).

"Since our focus is project-based, we're able to really dig into what our clients want in a design," says Brian Oster, creative director, Concept and Project Management, at OC Imageworks. "We use our collective experience and knowledge to provide exactly what they need."

"Even if they don't know what questions to ask, we provide the answers."

Collaboration with a client throughout the entire design process is important for OC Imageworks.

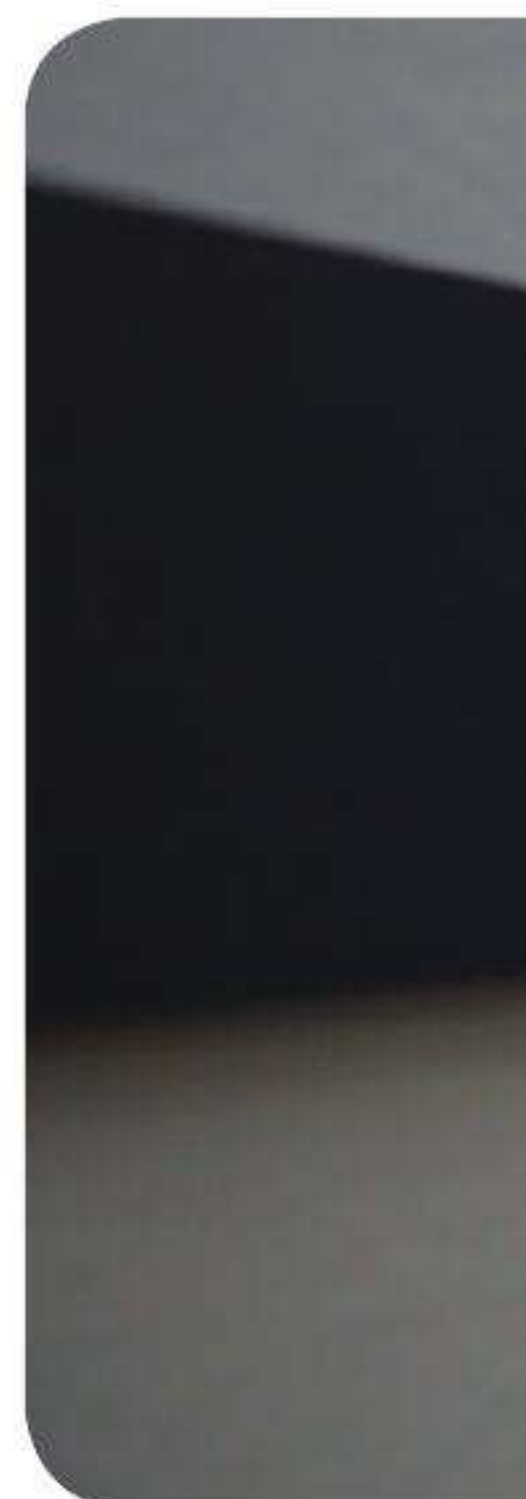
"We never do cookie-cutter projects," explains Oster. "Whether corporate or small business, educational or non-profit, we get to know our clients and their industry-unique challenges."

Kuhn, Oster, and OC Imageworks Art Director Erin Nolan met with the Manning family, and it seemed each family member had their own vision of what they wanted.

Trying to arrive at a consensus solution amongst a large group with individual opinions can prove taxing. However Oster stresses that they allowed everyone's input to be heard here.

"Then we proceeded to what's achievable within their budget and timeframe in order to narrow down the possibilities of what we could do for them," he says.

During pre-production, OC Imageworks follows a documented intake process that's customized for each client. And on *every* project, no matter how large or small and whether video or design, they start discussions with their client on three topics—Audience, Distribution, and Purpose (ADP).



ALL PHOTOS: OC IMAGEWORKS



The timeline display found in the new Manning Ford showroom includes family photos, newspaper clippings, past advertisements, and notable dates.

Celebrating 40 years

The Manning family commemorated four decades with hopes of many more anniversaries to come. (Pat Manning seated next to his grandparents.)



An interesting PVC panel created for *Speeding Through Time* features a 1960 photo commemorating 40 years of family business (*above*). The future owner—then grandchild—poses for the camera.

The reproduced scan of an actual 1935 Ford advertisement makes up part of the display.



The ADP drives nearly every aspect of a project, such as: What colors to use? How large (or small) are the photos? What font will be used? What elements should be included?

“As we did a walk-through with the client, we took photos, as well as area measurements, to be used for the digital mock-ups we created using Photoshop® and Illustrator® CC,” says Nolan.

After finishing the ADP, OC Imageworks quickly reviewed comparable projects with the family.

“This told our creative team what the family liked and disliked regarding style, geometric shapes, lines, colors, patterns, depth, etc.,” says Oster. “We could have the most beautifully designed wall graphic or vehicle wrap, but if we choose a color that our client absolutely hates, it’ll be nearly impossible for them to review it without a bias, let alone approve it.”

They found that the Manning family all agreed they wanted a look that could be deemed “professional” and “fast.” They thought the use of the Ford Blue color throughout would make an immediate, eye-catching impact on a customer walking into their showroom.

They also wanted directional signage to make navigating their large showroom easier.

Finally the family requested wall art along with a history wall outlining the important dates from their business that has been passed down through four generations—the genesis for *Speeding Through Time*.

OC Imageworks reviewed comparable designs with the family that ranged from museum timelines to city histories.

“Although we didn’t really run into too many surprises along the way, our pre-production research and concept planning was intense, which is how we prefer to have it with every one of our projects,” says Oster. “We want to walk through all of the details on the front end with the client and any vendors involved, so nothing catches us off guard.

“No one likes making or paying for change requests, so we focus hard on pre-planning and pulling out all the information we need in Phase I and II of a project.”

Setting the Display in Motion

The Manning family gave them original antique photos of the family and their work, as well as newspaper articles of the dealership and their past advertisements for scanning. The best

image from each decade was chosen for clarity and context. White gloves were used when handling the delicate pieces, and the scanner was cleaned thoroughly with microfiber fabric to create a dust-free scan.

“We scanned each piece at 600- to 1200-dpi, depending on their size,” says Nolan. “Smaller images were scanned at higher resolutions to allow for better print quality when enlarged. We also de-screened the newspaper images, in order to remove the halftone.

They then sent these EPS files to Banner Up Signs to produce this “timely” display.

Making a Trip Through Time

Speeding Through Time is made up of nineteen individual display panels. Banner Up Signs produced them using 6-mil (1/4-inch-thick) black PVC ranging in sizes from 10-by-10 inches to 10-by-16 inches.

The year line between the rows of photos was produced out of a total of four strips of 6-mil PVC.

“We combined the year strips and the history panels onto a four-by-eight-foot canvas size when printing,” says Kuhn. “We then mounted the print to the PVC and sent it through the table router to cut everything out.”





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Pictures provided by: TekSign

For the triangular portion on the far left of the display, Banner Up Signs utilized 3-mil (1/8-inch-thick) Alupanel solid-center composite aluminum purchased from Wensco Sign Supply.

"Due to the size of this piece and its shape, we knew we were going to need something pretty rigid and stable," says Kuhn.

Banner Up printed the background graphic onto ORAJET® 3105HT with ORAGUARD® 290 Matte Laminate via their HP26500 Latex Printer. They printed this decal out in seven pieces with vertical seams and overlap. (Note: Overall 165 square feet of material was printed for the wall.)

"During installation, we constantly checked to make sure the decals were level and that the overlap was exact," says Kuhn. "The most difficult part was applying the decal around a built-in desk in the wall."

The date line and individual event panels were custom-routed from a four-by-eight-foot sheet of 6-mil black PVC panel with ORAJET® 3165RA digital media and ORAGUARD® 210 Matte PVC laminate applied to the face.

The PVC panels were attached to the printed background with one-inch 3M™ foam tape. Lines connecting these panels to the date line were created from black ORACAL® 951 film and applied directly to the ORAGUARD 290 laminate.

The multi-dimensional, angled "Our History" panel on the far left of the display complements a television set on the wall. Two sheets of 3-mil Alupanel (one in brushed silver and one in black) were fed through a flatbed router and cut to shape.

"In regards to the wording, we cut out the word 'Our' from scrap material, since it was its own dimensional item," ex-



The triangular "Our History" portion of the timeline display complements a TV set on the wall.



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plains Kuhn. "Then we reverse-cut 'History' out of the main brushed shape."

Two blue background decals were printed from ORAJET 3165RA with ORAGUARD 210 matte laminate and then applied to the routed triangle black pieces.

"The brushed silver panel was applied overtop the blue triangle with 3M VHB," says Kuhn.

Banner Up Signs installed 12-mil black PVC cleats onto the back of the large triangle that line up with cleats anchored to the drywall.

"The display was cut precisely to fit around the television mount and simply hangs in place," says Kuhn.

With a tight turnaround on this project, Banner Up Signs wanted to ensure the vinyl was adhering to its fullest potential within the first twenty-four hours.

They first wiped the PVC with a damp cloth to minimize the static and get rid of any large dust particles. They then washed the panel with a 90/10 mixture of Isopropyl Alcohol and water. This allowed for a dust-free surface in which to apply the laminated vinyl.

Employees squeegeed the decal using a crescent-shaped felt squeegee from Fellers. They then ran a heat gun over surface and did one last squeegee before sending it to the table router.

Bringing Everything Home

According to Oster, the tight deadline proved particularly challenging on this project.

"We had less than five days once the mock-up was approved

by the Manning family to put this together and send to [Kuhn] to produce and install for the grand opening," he says.

Meanwhile Kuhn cites working around the wall-mounted TV set as another challenge.

"There were so many wires behind the unit that we determined it would be more complicated to remove it," he says. "Instead we decided to go around it. We measured twice and cut one and the display fit perfectly!"

In the end, not only were Brad Manning Ford and its customers at the grand reopening impressed with *Speeding Through Time*, but so too were the sign makers and designers.

"I enjoy that two local, family-owned businesses completed this project for another local, family-owned business," says Nolan. **SBI**

Roll Call

INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE THIS PROJECT A REALITY:

- Brian Oster (*OC Imageworks*) – Creative Director, Concept, and Project Management
- Erin Nolan (*OC Imageworks*) – Art Director, Concept, and Entire Design
- Jon Kuhn (*Banner Up*) – Proofing, Printing, Production, and Installation
- Ed Kuhn (*Banner Up*) – Production
- Thomas Devila (*Banner Up*) – Production
- Bryan Jack (*Banner Up*) – Installation

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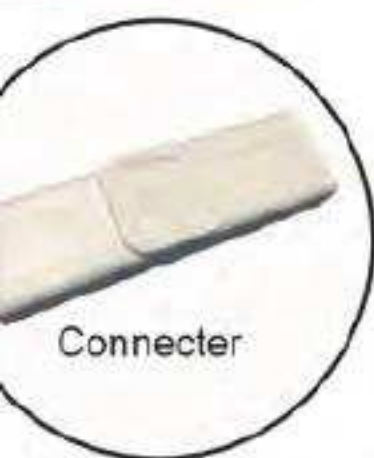
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Educated Wayfinding

Providing a variety of wayfinding and identity signs for West Virginia University.

City Neon went back to school on a recent project for West Virginia University (WVU) in Morgantown, West Virginia. City Neon has a long relationship with the university as the shop has done work for them in the past; even the owner, as well as some employees, are alumni.

The last time *Sign Builder Illustrated*

covered City Neon ("Serving up Neon," November 2015), they were fabricating neon signage for a number of Primanti Bros. locations. But don't be fooled by this shop's name—beyond neon, they do everything from dimensional signage to monuments to banners.

This particular project called for nine signs: one granite monument, three di-

rectional signs, two smaller directional signs, and three signs at the west, north, and east entrances to campus.

City Neon faced two deadlines for this project.

The first gave the shop two months to complete the granite monument and all directional signs so that WVU had wayfinding signage in place before school started.

On the second deadline, City Neon had a month-and-a-half to complete the rest of the entrance signs.

The shop finished both these ahead of schedule—about two weeks after the first deadline.

Granite Monument

For the main entry to campus, WVU wanted to make a big statement, so they chose to go with an eighteen-foot-tall, real granite monument—despite the cost.

The new monument matches the two smaller granite signs already on campus. "This is the first thing you see when you come into Morgantown now," says Chris Payton Atkins, operations manager at City Neon (cityneon.com).

City Neon sourced all of the granite from a local company. They chose a



The three entrance signs feature an illuminated flying WV at the top made of acrylic and wrapped in yellow vinyl.

To keep the directional signs as thin as possible while still fitting LEDs inside, City Neon used SignComp cabinets.



▲ **Evansdale
Residential Complex**

◀ **Lincoln Hall**

◀ **Allen Hall &
Percival Hall**

◀ **Blaney House**

▲ **No Thru Traffic**

special-colored granite that was black with hints of blue and gold to match the school's colors. They chose a lighter, tan-colored granite for the school's flying "WV" at the top of the monument.

The monument also features stud-mounted bronze letters from Gemini.

To install the sign, City Neon created a huge, eighteen-foot concrete form.

The granite company had pre-drilled holes for the rebar, so the granite fit right over them. The rebar runs all the way up the center of the monument.

To complete the install, a mini excavator and a large crane were used. The shop also had to rent a pump truck, since the concrete had to be poured from eighteen feet in the air. The \$1,500 cost for the

Directional Signs

WVU wanted all of the lit signs on this project to be as thin as possible while still being able to fit LEDs inside. City Neon accomplished this by using SignComp cabinets.

For the three wayfinding signs, City Neon chose SignComp Series 7 cabinets.

The six rectangular sections of the

This particular project called for nine signs: one granite monument, three directional signs, two smaller directional signs, and three signs at the west, north, and east entrances to campus.

The shop dug a footing and installed rebar poles about four to five feet deep in the ground that rise straight up. "We built a form around it, poured the concrete in around the rebar and everything to strengthen it, and then, once it dried, we pulled the forms off, and the granite people attached the granite to it," says Atkins.

one yard of concrete and the truck was something City Neon had worked into the cost of their bid.

The shop also ran power for ground floodlights illuminating the monument. (Note: Throughout the WVU project, City Neon often made use of a trencher to run power to different sign locations.)

sign used for directional information are made of white polycarbonate faces with blue Orafol vinyl applied over them. The letters were weeded out of the vinyl so the white polycarbonate showed through in the negative space.

The flying "WV" featured at the top of the cabinet was routed out of alu-

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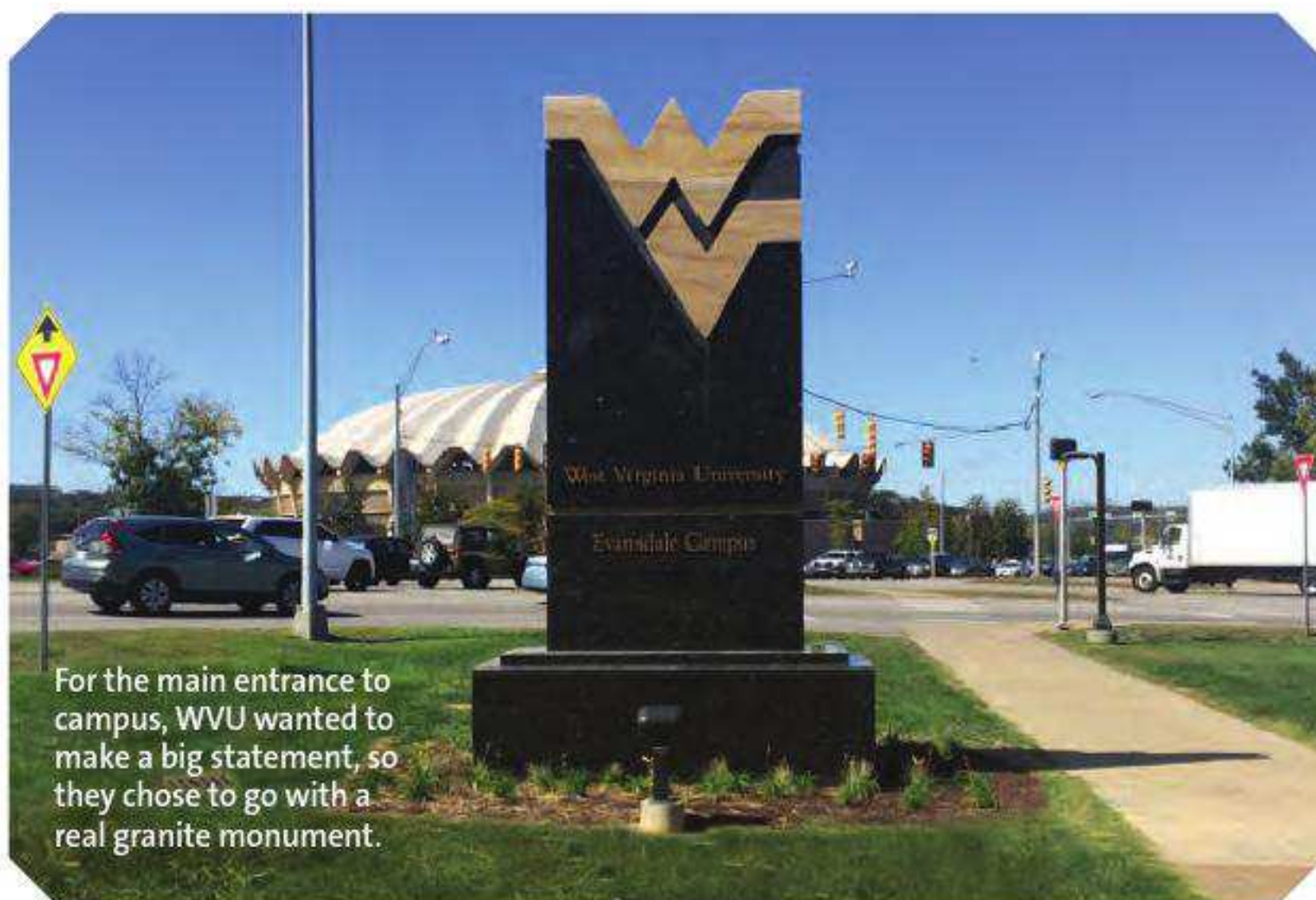
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For the main entrance to campus, WVU wanted to make a big statement, so they chose to go with a real granite monument.

The granite monument at the entrance to WVU's campus is now the first thing people see when they come into the city of Morgantown.

minum using a ShopSabre CNC router. White polycarbonate with blue Orafol vinyl was then back-mounted to the cut-out. The sign is illuminated with MaxBrite Aladdin LEDs.

To fabricate the stone bases, City Neon attached concrete board to a painted steel angle frame and then attached the stone to the concrete board.

City Neon repeated this process on the bases for all of the signs (except the main granite sign).

"It gave us the convenience of doing all of the stonework in our shop in a controlled environment, while also saving time by not having to move from location to location and reset up everything," says Atkins.

To install the signs, City Neon dug a footing, inserted rebar poles, and poured concrete in.

"Once the footings were dry, we came and set the stone base on top, and we set a sandstone cap on top of the base," says Atkins. "We had two poles coming out of the base that were welded to the frame the stone is around, and then the sign




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slid over those poles and was attached on the inside to the poles.”

(Note: A Manitex SkyCrane was used on all of the installs except for the main granite sign.)

Smaller Wayfinding Signs

The other two wayfinding signs were constructed with SignComp Series 3 cabinets.

Since these signs are unlit, City Neon opted to paint them with Matthews Paint rather than use vinyl (since no light needed to be dispersed).

However white cut Orafol vinyl was used for the directional elements along with yellow Orafol vinyl for the flying “WV.”

These signs also sit on a stone base with a sandstone cap, and they were installed in the same way as the three directional signs.

Entrance Signs

The second half of the project required City Neon to complete three entrance signs, which they did using SignComp Series 7 cabinets.

The SignComp cabinet holds the yellow flying “WV” at the top of each sign in place. The “WV” is made of acrylic and wrapped in yellow Orafol vinyl.

The letters on the sign were routed out of the aluminum using the Shop-Sabre router, and acrylic was back-mounted to show through the negative space. Both the letters and the flying “WV” light up and are illuminated by MaxBrite LEDs.

The rest of the sign was painted blue and yellow with Matthews Paint.

The installation of the signs followed the same procedure as the others, and these three also sit on a stone base with a sandstone cap.

Finishing Touches

Some of the unique challenges City Neon ran into on this job aren’t always a requirement of sign shops—landscaping and electrical work.

In addition to running power to all the signs, City Neon also had to complete the landscaping for all nine signs, which included 250 day lilies and 50 bushes. To accomplish this task, they



The two smaller wayfinding signs are unlit and painted.

teamed up with their company’s sister business, a real estate company, and had their landscaping crew come in.

WVU loved the completed signs, and the main granite monument has become a landmark for the surrounding community.

“It was just a really good, marquee project for us,” says Atkins. [SB](#)



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Married to Vinyl

One of the benefits of vinyl wraps is that they are temporary, which is just what a wedding venue needed when a client asked for a hot pink floor for their wedding reception.

Dolce Design | New York, a sign and wrap company that specializes in commercial wraps and custom dimensional signs, was brought on to

handle this floor wrap. Dolce Design had just three days to complete the wrap. "We supplied the customer with our Avery color selector guides, so while under the gun, we were working with a media we were familiar and comfortable with," says Christopher Fragala, president and founder of Dolce Design | New York (dolcedesignnewyork.com).

Dolce Design used Avery Dennison® 700 High Performance Film Series in Blossom 6415. Since the vinyl is durable, no printing was involved; and it was such a short-term application, no laminate was needed.

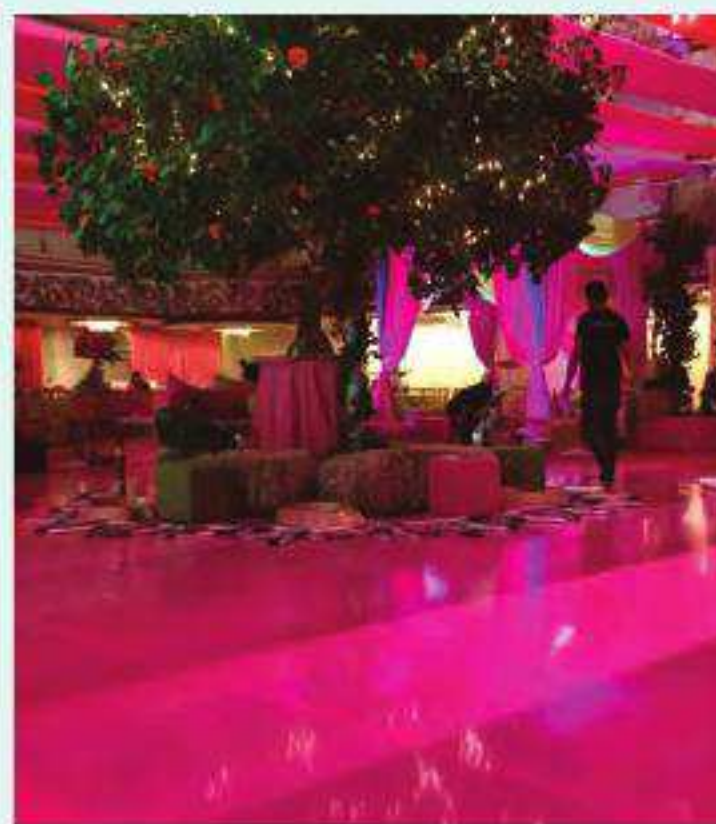
Three installers from Dolce Design applied the graphics onto the marble floor. After prep, the install took five hours. The team used two 24-inch-by-150-foot rolls of media (about 600 square feet of media). They applied the vinyl using the dry install method. "We were unable to use a wet method, which would have required an extra day to cure," says Fragala.

Dolce Design returned the following Monday to remove the graphics. Despite over 400 guests dancing and walking all over the graphics, the wrap was in great condition and only scuffmarks were left behind.

Using an infrared lamp to heat the material, Dolce Design spent two-and-a-half hours removing the vinyl. "If done correctly, no adhesive residue gets left behind," says Fragala. "We still give the floor a once over with adhesive remover so its left in the same condition we found it in."

Both the venue and the wedding party were pleased with the results, and Dolce Design hopes to continue doing large floor wraps like this one in the future.

—Ashley Bray



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For decades, the experience of being in one place while viewing a “You Are Here” map was linear and rooted in the physical environment. Today there are multiple places to “be” while navigating, as well as multiple channels to direct movement, guide directions, and allow for mapping (thanks to GPS and virtual maps).

For sign professionals, the opportunity—and challenge—is to integrate all of these exciting developments into one wayfinding program.

Integrated Wayfinding

Turning to the expertise of an environmental graphic design firm might be a good place to gather information on the latest developments in integrated wayfinding.

“We start our projects with the notion that each client has

ALL PHOTOS (UNLESS NOTED): FMG DESIGN, INC.



Everywhere

a unique challenge,” says Mary R. Grems, SEGD, principal of FMG Design, Inc. (fmgdesign.com), a Houston-based firm that relies on evidence-based design and behavioral field data to guide their work. “Each environment is different, and our process develops solutions tailored to meet these challenges.

“The goal of every project is an effective and profitable solution.”

According to those who advocate for evidence-based design, greater effectiveness (and profit) can be achieved when sound empirical data is applied to the process of design.

Founded in 1983 by Grems and Ferdinand Meyer V, much of FMG’s work focuses on designing and implementing comprehensive environmental graphics programs for hotels, corporate headquarters, residential/resort communities, institutional and public facilities, commercial office and retail developments, and healthcare and mixed-use projects.

The multitude of factors involved in navigating a visitor through a healthcare center or similar large campus can be addressed using integrated wayfinding, which Grems defines as “the exploration and understanding of human factors, including psychological and physical conditions that affect a user.”

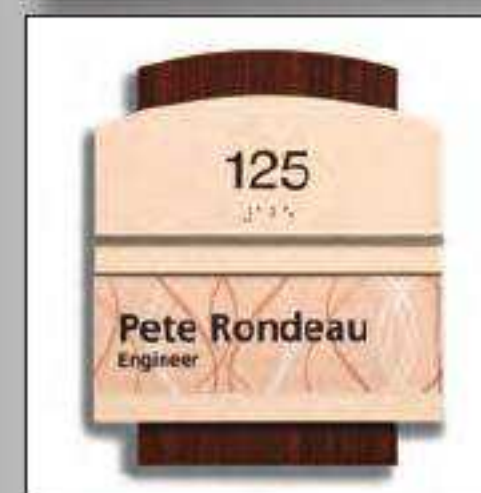
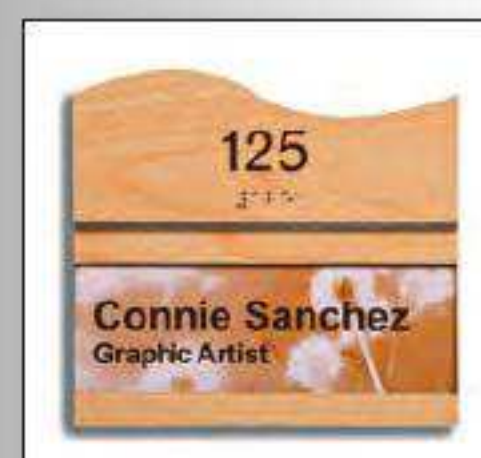
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With this concept, each potential communication and touchpoint should be an opportunity to deliver consistent and relevant wayfinding information.

"These touchpoints not only include environmental graphic design and wayfinding signage but also extend beyond signage to include campus, architectural, and interior elements; online information; printed materials; human interactions; and electronic wayfinding tools," says Grems.

Electronic Wayfinding

When it comes to electronic wayfinding, posting information is critical.

"For the interior, we typically propose using non-interactive, high-definition displays for key visitor gathering areas and lobbies," says Grems. "Screens would be large and posted in conspicuous areas for mass viewing. General, topical, and specific information will all be displayed.

"These displays are critical in eliminating clutter such as banners and easels that tend to show up in public areas."

These units, she adds, should be vertical and can be freestanding and wall-mounted, depending on the location.

Best practices would allow for general information to be displayed while the display is in a dormant mode, while specific information would be prompted by a visitor requesting information or directions offered in several languages.

For auditoriums, dining areas, and conference centers, the focus is on relevant and engaging messaging that can be viewed while attendees participate in other activities. Grems advises studying the environment to consider wall-mounted electronic displays for foyers to convey general event and topical information.

And when it comes to board rooms, training rooms, and meeting and conference rooms, these message boards should convey events and times for that room only, while identification or room information can be posted in a dormant mode.

Messaging and Pictograms

Overall messaging and pictograms must be consistent.

"Short, succinct instructions are important," says Grems. "You should be able to print out driving, parking, and destination-finding instructions. The incorporation of language modules is important."

There are specific challenges unique to healthcare facilities, including the re-



sulting confusion with naming, numbering, and giving directions.

"Usually acronyms known only to insiders are used that the public doesn't understand. Interior areas and department naming is usually inconsistent, and ceremonious and geographic names are used," says Grems.

To mitigate this, FMG typically determines all primary destinations for each facility and then scripts a common sense, clear naming process to simplify. "Training Staff" and 'Welcome Desk' in scripting helps the visitor determine what facility is needed, how to get there, where to park, which entrance to go into, and how to find their destination," she says.

Last but not least, an integrated wayfinding system is not complete without

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printed user guides and maps. "A visitor wayfinding guide is typically developed for each facility that includes the system map, facility site plan, parking areas, interior plans, destinations, patient rooms numbers, and pictogram definition," says Grems.

Case Study: Parkview Regional Medical Center

Incorporating many of these practices, FMG embarked on a wayfinding project for Parkview Regional Medical Center, a not-for-profit, community-based health

system serving northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio. A large facility, it is the largest employer in the region with more than 8,500 staff. It includes eight hospitals across northeast Indiana and primary care physicians in Indiana and Ohio.

FMG Design partnered with other firms to design placemaking, wayfinding, recognition, environmental graphics, and a new brand identity and logo to be integrated across the core hospital, new heart hospital, women's and children's hospital, and orthopedic hospitals.

A challenge for this project was that



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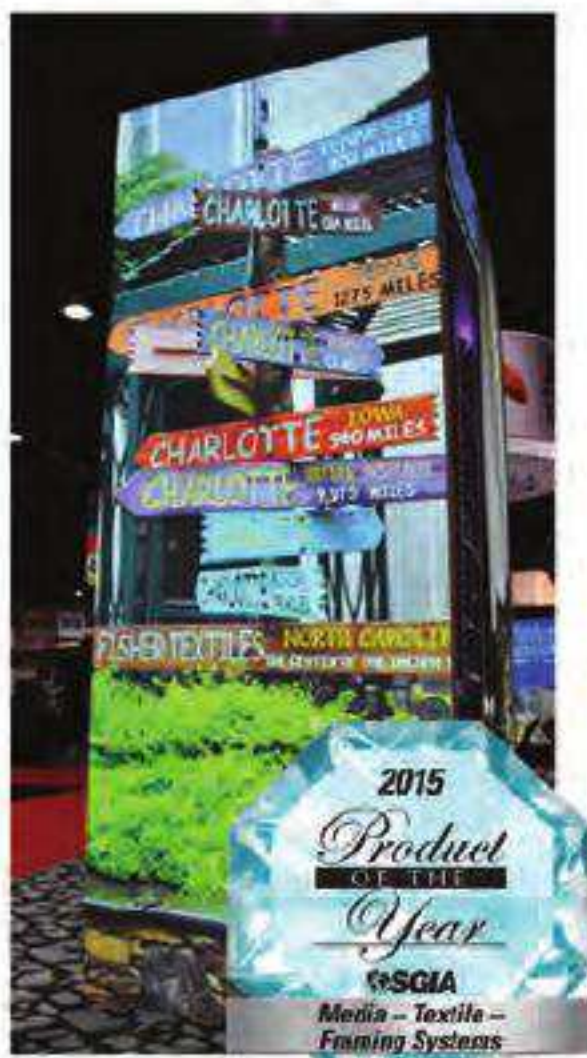


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the existing campus entrance numbering system had to be revised with the addition of the new hospitals. To alleviate any confusion among visitors, existing addressing and scripting of the campus facilities had to be modified.

Grems adds that establishing a realistic budget with Parkview Health and the general contractor at the onset helped keep the budget intact and allowed it to be met in the final analysis.

Tips and Best Practices

With any wayfinding program, FMG recommends incorporating several tips and best practices for greater efficiency.

As proponents of evidence-based design, their first point is to ensure that research is conducted along with a site analysis and audit.

Second (and very important) is to focus on interdisciplinary cooperation, exploring the boundaries among graphic, lighting, industrial, landscape, and urban design to create a more inclusive and intuitive design.

Also high on their list is reducing clutter and visual pollution (easels, banners, taped paper, etc.) for which Grems recommends creating a "zero-tolerance" policy. "All public areas should be devoid of clutter, which hinders the wayfinding and navigation process," she says. "This allows for a positive arrival experience. Alternative means of posting information should be recommended."

The firm also advises the use of international symbols and landmarks to cater to diverse visitors and populations, as well as "progressive disclosure" (a design technique used in signage to improve wayfinding by presenting only the minimum information required for local destinations).

(Note: On their list of "avoids" is not to use multiple languages on one sign, which will render the display too large and complex.)

And finally, they recommend not adding more signage to a wayfinding system that needs to be rethought.

"Evaluate an existing system and determine if a new system would be better," says Grems. "We believe that environmental graphics should engage the viewer while communicating information and creating a connection between the person and their surroundings in the navigation of the built environment." sbi.com

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Building an Address

The numbers are in concerning design ideas for identification signs.

Over the past year, I've seen an increase in regulations requiring commercial buildings to have their address number(s) displayed in plain sight. There is an assumption that this would be a logical idea versus a regulated idea.

It's important to realize that signs are really for the first-time or occasional visitor. A large, singular establishment (think Costco or Target) can be easy to find just by their logo on an identification sign or building alone. And these are sufficiently large enough to be viewed blocks away.

But consider that small business located at the end of a very, very long strip mall or tucked away in a complex development. For these clients, not only is their signage key but the building or address number becomes an important tool as well.



Where am I?

Normally we think in terms of the street number first, then the street name—for example, “800 8th Street” or “1325 Avenue of the Americas.” You’ll find these numerals easily identify the building, even when the street name follows it.

There may be some assumed information involved here as well.

We know what street we are standing on or traveling on so keep in mind that, in some cases, a number may be the only required indicator (Photo 1).

Also some establishments may not need the retail-level of signage as you’ll find displayed at a shopping mall or airport. A building that occupies a very large space can be identified through signage as a singular location (Photo 2), as opposed to many different signs and addresses that would be assigned to comparable smaller subdivisions.

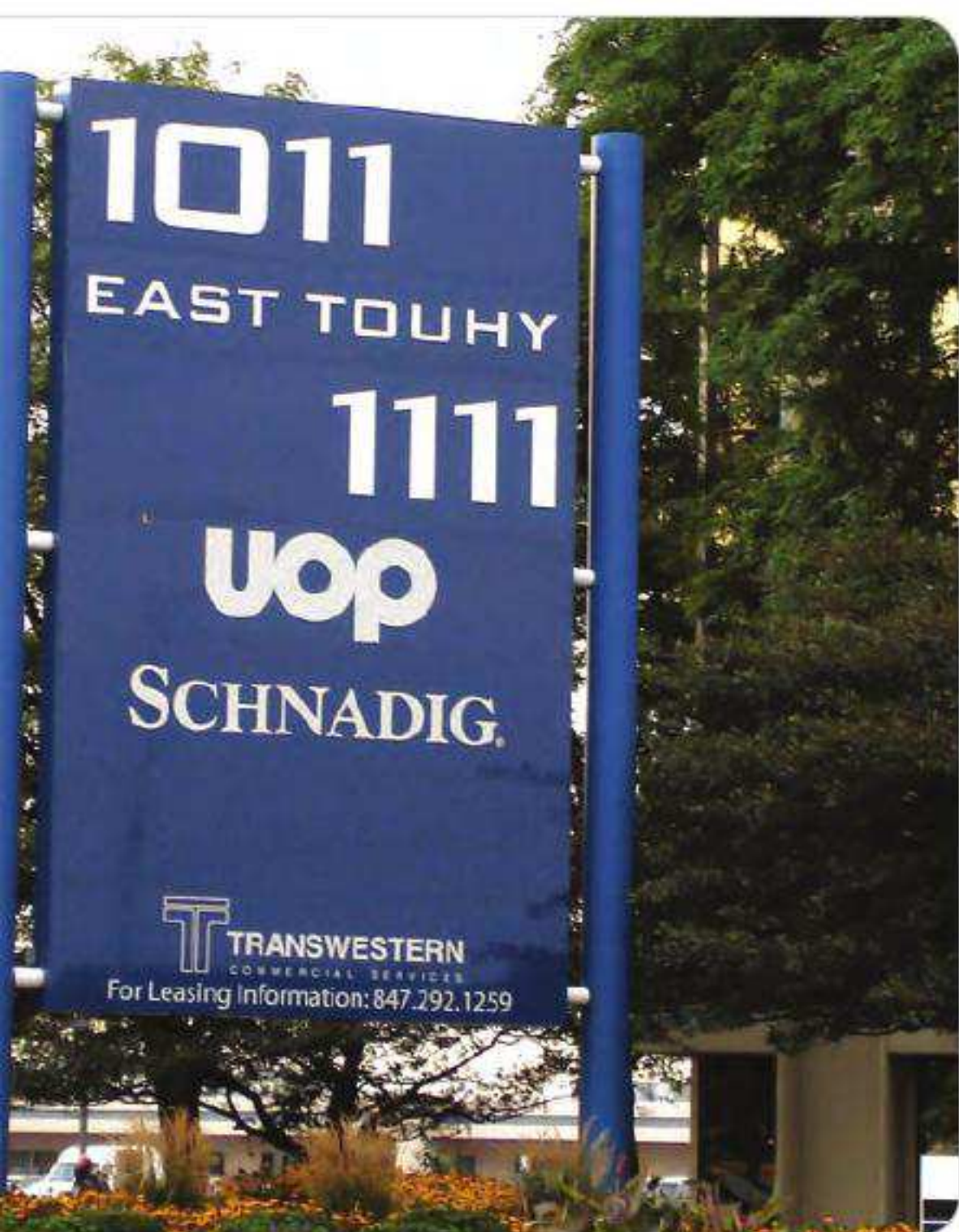
However there are some anomalies that are actually quite confounding.

For example, take buildings that have their address designation on the main thoroughfare, while their entrance is instead on a side street or in a central courtyard. In these cases, an address sign can be designed and installed to appeal to pedestrians (Photo 3). This type of set-up can prove ideal if one has to drive to a location, park the car in an adjacent parking lot, and then walk to get to the proper destination.

Where am I Headed?

Direction is an oft-confusing part of location. Streets that are directionally divided based on some defined boundary into theoretical halves—East and West, North and South—plague the populace with limited logic.





The good thing about using a building address as a sign is the relative simplicity, but that doesn't mean there aren't examples that make use of quite interesting designs.



Oh sure, a person with knowledge about your destination can tell you that it's "easy" to find with the divider being "Central Avenue" or maybe a "meridian." But what happens when the division is based on a river, particularly one that meanders a bit?

In some cases, the distance between locations is quite small (such as "East" and "West" in Phoenix, Arizona). So an address on the "East" part of the street may be confused with the same number just a couple of blocks that way on the "West" part (Photo 4).

There may be no sign solutions that can easily separate "9th Avenue West" from "9th Street South," but the information can be visibly available in both big and small designs.

Visibility

Have you ever seen that cartoon about the bar that has "Free Beer" painted on the wall alongside its parking lot? But it's the tiny, little disclaimer ("Next Friday!") underneath it that's hard to see.

The large print giveth, and the small print taketh away. This can prove true with identification signage as well.

A grand example of a building address that has one little word dropped in-between the digits can be seen in Photo 5. It's the little word "thru" that holds the secret here.

But if you drove up to this sign, would you be able to quickly do the math and discern what it was trying to tell you? Is the

Double Your Pleasure



With two sets of "1011" numbers, this solution is ready to take on all comers. Approaching from either of two directions may require twin build-

ing numbers—with one design and one address—that both benefit the sign fabricator.

building number you're looking for between those two major building numbers or is it standing still inside a building?

You definitely don't want to stop the car to think about this. Nor do you want to circle round and round and have to use the boulevard to make a U-turn.

At least "big and bold" is visible.

Readability

Visibility also comes in the form of contrast. Dark letters on a light background are great (Photo 6). Reverse it and your design will also serve the public well.

As with any item that we read, copy color versus background color and the font style and font size can all make for an easy-to-grasp mentality.

The good thing about a building address is its relative simplicity; however that doesn't mean there aren't examples with quite interesting sign designs.

Whether it's curved steel (Photo 7) or creatively using the architecture as a background (Photo 8), there is apparently a lot one can do with an address number as signage.

But the struggle, I've found, is to have some creative control with this.

Often the address is a nominal thing and not a key element in the package. A few of my favorites are simple yet distinct, and when it comes to design, sometimes this proves to be the best advice. [SBI](#)

Department of Redundancy



Here the "sign" is a number. But look behind it. You'll notice the same number as a cut-vinyl window application. Is this a case of the

business name being one thing and a required address another, even though they might just be the same thing?





The Appeal of SEG Fabric Graphics

If you're currently able to print graphics onto fabric, then your shop is already half-way into a career in the burgeoning market of silicone edge graphics (SEG), which after taking off in Europe, are becoming popular at tradeshow and special events nowadays.

This type of dye-sublimated fabric graphic is finished with a thin silicone strip or a rectangular gasket that's sewn directly to the edge of the graphic. Then the strip is inserted into a special extrusion with a recessed groove that holds the fabric face into the frame.

This look is very clean, very tight, and very smooth—"frameless," if you will.

At first, these SEG extrusions weren't very common; but over the past couple of years, several companies have started to provide them (single-face, double-face, internally illuminated)—but they all tend to run along the same lines.

Although SEG products have been used outside, weather limits its scope under sun and clouds. Instead you'll find them more at malls, airports, hospitals, churches, etc.

Its key market is retail. One concept is to install a single-face frame on an interior wall—like in a car dealership, for example. Create seasonal, updated graphics or change the graphic with the new model year. The frame goes up once,

a new graphic is sent in a simple rolled up tube. A program across several dealerships becomes a simple-to-replace repeat business affair.

Meanwhile SEG graphics in a theater or church can be installed over sound-absorbing panels. The graphic creates a different look and feel

compared to the blank boredom of burlap over fiberglass batts.

A word of caution: A busy image makes for a busy print, but in general, stay away from white. Not only do wrinkles show but so too do dust and dirt. Cleaning also is more complex on a large section of plain white fabric.

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3	A.R.K. Ramos	58	35	Signs365	C4			
4	AXYZ International	19	36	Small Balls, Inc.	59			
5	Brooklyn Hardware	58	37	Southern Stud Weld	56			
6	Channel Letter USA	58	38	Stamm Manufacturing	28			
7	Clarke Systems	41	39	Stouse, Inc.	58			
8	Clarke Systems	43	40	Trotec Laser	29			
9	Clarke Systems	45	41	Universal Laser Systems	34			
10	Coastal Enterprises Co.	37	42	US LED	27			
11	Delcam	38	43	USSC (United States Sign Council)	39	47	Canon USA, Inc.	14
12	Duxbury Systems	58	44	USSC (United States Sign Council)	42	48	Epson	14
13	Echod Graphics	59	45	Vista System	58	49	Gemini, Inc.	14
14	Epson	8-9	46	Wilkie Mfg., LLC	C3	50	Gravotech, Inc.	16
15	Fisher Textiles	46				51	LexJet	16
16	G2G Lighting	30-31				52	Novus Imaging	14
17	GE Lighting	1				53	Roland DGA	15
18	Hartlauer Bits, Inc.	46				54	Techno CNC	15
19	J. Freeman, Inc.	21				55	TriVantage	14
20	LIGHTFAIR International	47						
21	Magnum Magnetics Corp.	44						
22	Mimaki USA	C2						
23	Mutoh America, Inc.	15						
24	OKI Data Americas	7						
25	Orbus, Inc.	59						
26	Orbus, Inc.	59						
27	Ornamental Post, Panel & Traffic ..	58						
28	Osram GmbH	5						
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30	Peachtree City Foamcraft	13						
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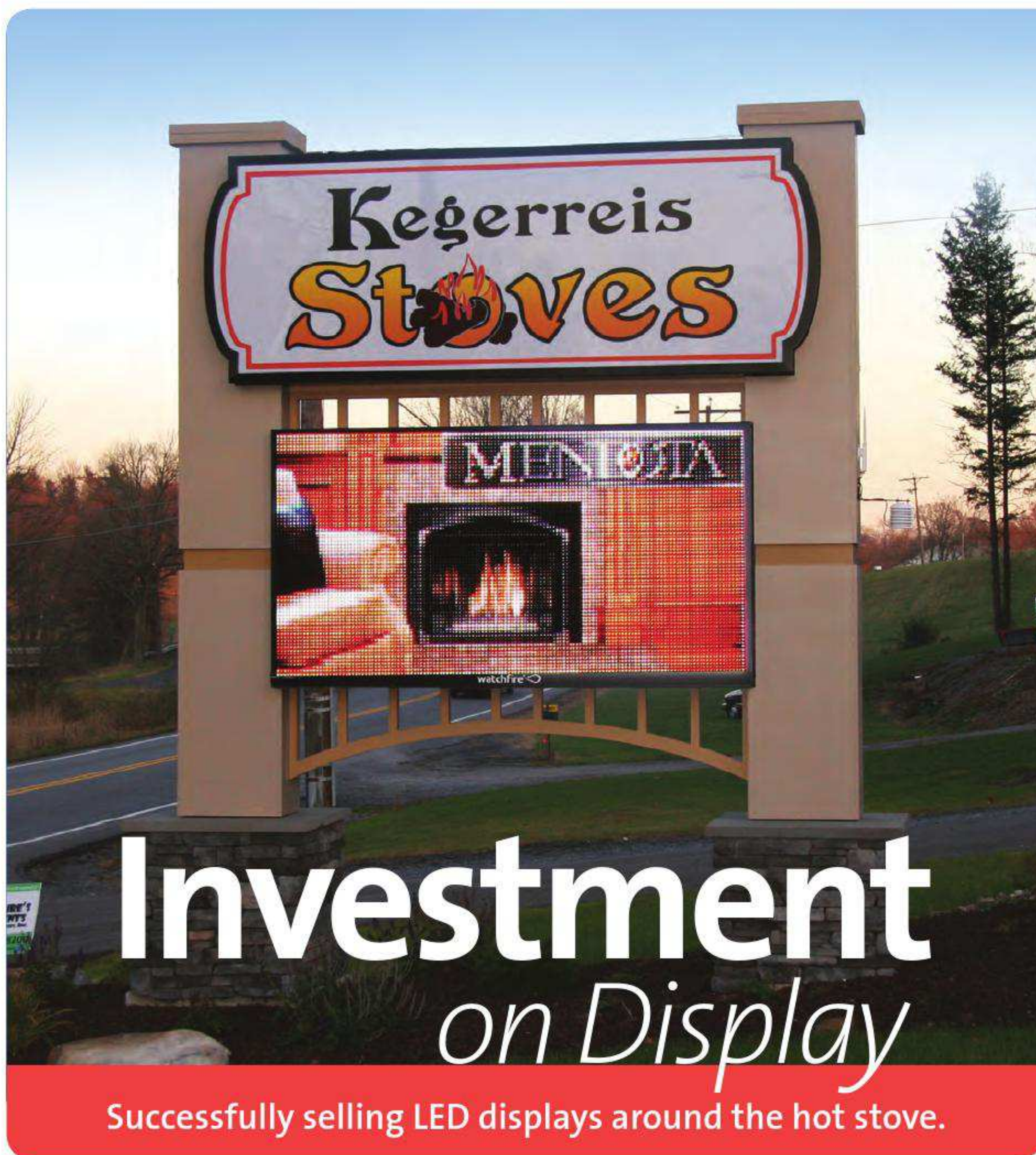
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Investment *on Display*

Successfully selling LED displays around the hot stove.

Kegerreis Stoves had a problem. This family-owned retailer has been in the niche business of selling and trading stoves and fireplaces since 1982. However the five-by-ten-foot static sign the store had been using for a decade at the entrance to their location on heavily traveled PA State Route 183 in Bernville, Pennsylvania was no longer pulling in enough clientele or generating much buzz.

So back in 2014, the owners upgraded to a double-faced 4-by-8-foot, 16mm Watchfire LED display. A year later, not only has this electronic sign proven beneficial for the busi-

ness, but it's been a win-win for the sign shop involved in its installation as well.

Frustrated by being unable to reach the fairly good traffic count going past their location, Kegerreis Stoves Owner Brian Kegerreis looked around at the digital sign activity in the area. "LED signs looked like an interesting way to advertise," he says.

Kegerreis approached Horst Signs of nearby Myerstown, Pennsylvania to replace their static sign with an LED display instead. (Note: Horst Signs had provided this static sign too.)



Kegerreis Stoves' five-by-ten-foot static sign (*left*), featuring an enlarged photograph of a stove, was no longer pulling in enough clientele, so the business decided to upgrade to an LED display (*below*). Horst Signs, which provided the original static sign back in 2004, supplied the new digital display.

Horst Signs has been around thirty-four years and today boasts a staff of twenty-two employees in two locations working on everything from small decals and truck lettering to banners, monuments, and channel letters.

They have a wide range of customers, but their "sweet spot" is providing custom signage for smaller, family-run, commercial clients. "We go more on a personal level with our clients," says Nathan Martin, project manager at Horst Signs. "Instead of just selling a plain, rectangular sign, we try to incorporate elements of their building, their property, or their offerings."

Another specialty that Horst Signs has found success with over the past fifteen years is digital signage and message center technology (serving as a partner with Watchfire Signs).

So Martin and Watchfire Signs Territory Manager Ben Barr met with Kegerreis and discussed updating to a turn-key LED sign package. (*Note: Martin and Barr visited the Kegerreis Stoves property and took photos for reference in coming up with a design.*)

The result is a Watchfire Sign display with full-color, high-definition animation and text incorporated into the new pylon sign structure that stands eighteen feet tall and measures eleven-and-a-half feet wide.

For the main LED-illuminated aluminum cabinets up top via bolts, Horst

Signs reused the logo they developed for Kegerreis ten years ago, printed it onto vinyl, and applied it over the polycarbonate face.

Martin also wanted to make more of a statement for Kegerreis Stoves than just two plain posts coming out of the ground. So Horst Signs incorporated a little bit of the store's architecture by skirting the steel pylons with aluminum

and painting them to match the building's exterior. The stones covering the bases of the pylons are not only intended to reinforce the quality of the stoves they sell and resell, but they are also used to promote longevity.

Horst Signs used their sixty-foot bucket truck and eighty-five-foot crane to lift the sign components into place.

They first added match plates to the steel pylons and mounted them into the ground. They then covered the match plates with the stonework.

For the Watchfire display, Horst Signs constructed a steel angle frame and bolted it between the two posts. They then bolted the LED signs to the steel frame and skirted everything afterwards to hide the framework.

The store is smartly using the sign beyond just text announcements. They're also showing stoves with flames to suggest the warmth of their products and to get noticed.

"We also post time and temperature readings for the community. Plus the sign lets us respond to changes in weather, like pushing wood pellets when the temperature drops or displaying grills when spring arrives," adds Kegerreis.

John Kunze, director of Sign Division



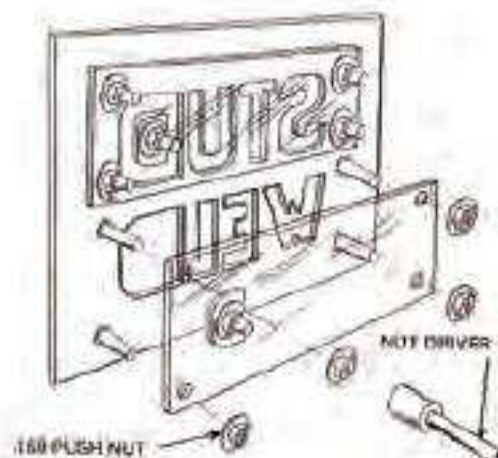


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Sales at Watchfire Signs (and who also provided input on this project), adds, "They take stoves in via trade-in, and they figured out that by showing those stoves on the LED display, they can sell them much more quickly," says Kunze. "With LED signage, they can immediately change the unit being advertised when one has been sold."

Kegerreis Stoves creates and updates the display's content via wireless broadband with Ignite OP software installed on a PC inside the store. They import content to create PowerPoint-type slides, preview how they're going to look, and edit and schedule from there.

(Note: Kegerreis uses content supplied by vendors. The sign can host .bmp, .gif, .jpeg, .ico, .emf, and .wmf files. It can also import dynamic content using RSS or XML feeds.)

Just one year after installing the LED display, Kegerreis Stoves has experienced its best sales year ever. By restructuring their advertising budget (traditionally spent on static billboards and newspaper ads) and pulling in more drive-by traffic, they've recouped their return-on-investment—and then some.

"They were astounded by the amount of people who stopped in and told them they had no idea they were there," says Martin.

"Seventy five percent of attendees at their open house last year said they'd learned about their business from the sign," adds Kunze.

"As the industry evolves, more people are realizing the value of LED signs," says Martin. "There's an ease in getting a message out there in a timely manner.

"The upgrade to a dynamic digital sign also speaks to a company that's alive and breathing and one that someone can confidently do business with. It's a way to connect with the passer-by and communicate to them who you are and what you do."

Horst Signs has benefitted too. When people ask Kegerreis who provided them the sign, he refers them to Horst.

Kunze says that full-service shops like Horst Signs (graphic design, installation support, etc.) are ideal for offering digital signage. "They know how to dig a footing and how to pour concrete," he says. "And they also understand the value of a digital sign and going out and promoting that to potential customers." **SBI**

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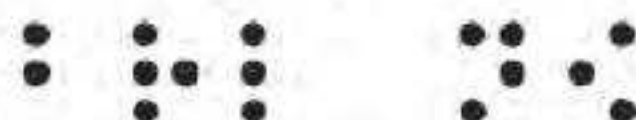
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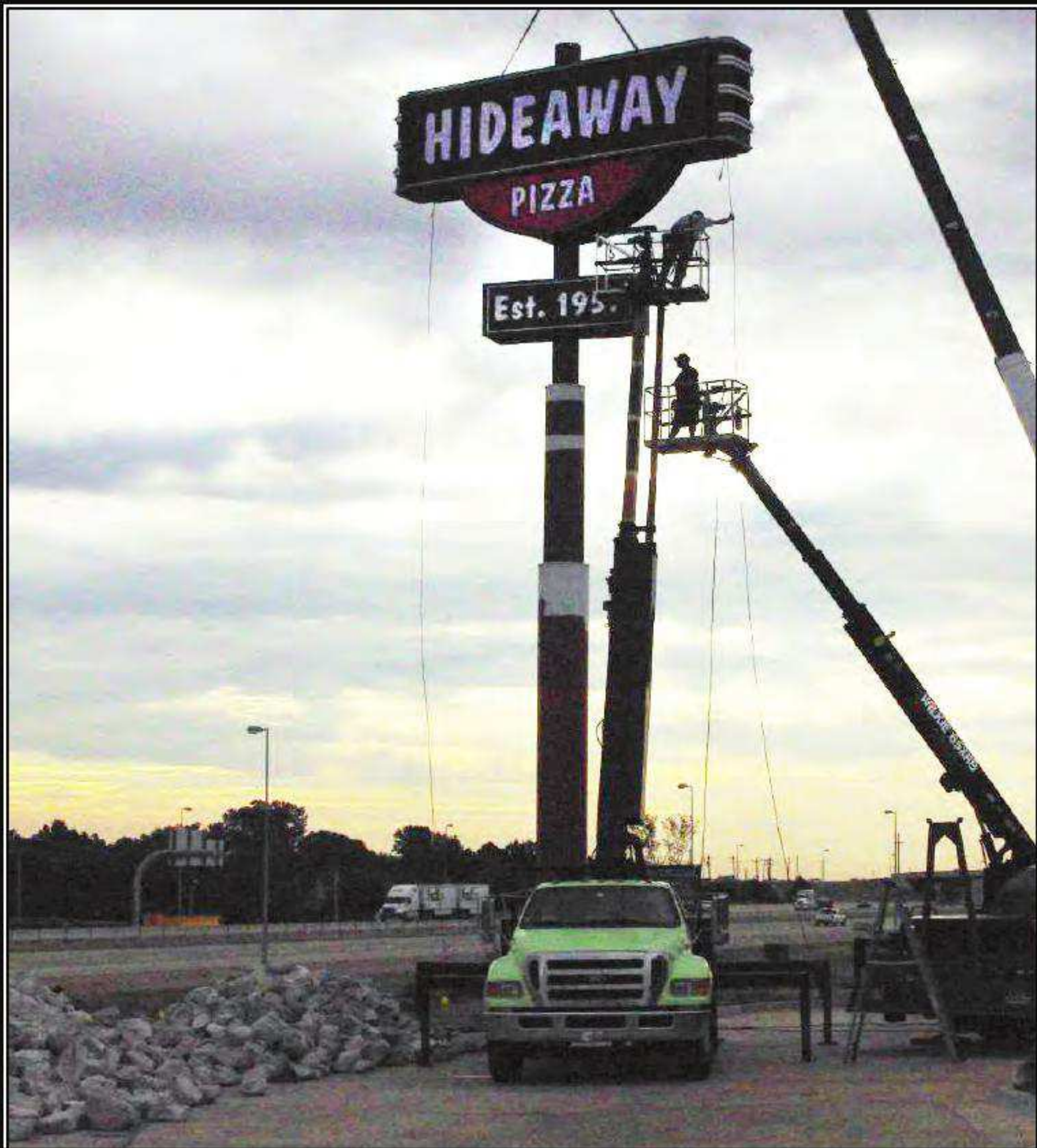
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Johnathan Warren, ISA Elite Member

Reaching Out to a Younger Generation



Welcome to the first installment of our series on members of the International Sign Association's and Northeast States Sign Association's inaugural Elite programs. These programs bring together the brightest young talent in our industry and, through tradeshow and networking, aim to help them dive deeper into the industry and progress their careers.

"Most people I talk to in the industry tell you that you're either born into the sign industry or you fall into it by accident, and I definitely did the latter," says Johnathan Warren, marketing manager at KeyedIn Manufacturing since 2012.

Warren may not have sought out a job in the sign industry, but he's happy he landed here. "It's so encouraging to be surrounded by people who genuinely like the work that they do," says Warren. "There's a good chance that if you're in the sign industry, you're going to stay for life."

At KeyedIn, Warren is the one-stop shop for the marketing of the company's sign software solution. He is also responsible for KeyedIn's relationships with sign associations.

Warren believes these associations really offer a myriad of opportunities to those new to the industry. "The best thing they can do is volunteer at an association," he says. "Most would welcome eager help, and it's a great opportunity to get you personal exposure and grow professionally but

also to begin to make some connections."

While signage offers many opportunities to young people, Warren understands why it could also turn them away. "One of the biggest problems in the sign industry is the aging workforce and the difficulty in attracting and retaining younger skilled or trained talent," he says. "That's because I think the sign industry has this stereotype of being 'stuck in their ways.'"

While the industry still has a ways to go in fully embracing the digital and connected world we live in, Warren points out that it's already home to numerous technological advances such as digital signage, digital printing, etc. "For younger people, the sign industry might seem dated or not flashy," he says. "But the truth is, there's some of the coolest, cutting-edge technologies going on."

In order to combat negative perceptions and attract younger talent, Warren believes the industry needs to better market itself. Initiatives like Sign Manufacturing Day help to demonstrate to the next generation what the industry offers, but Warren believes we can go even further by inviting more students to tradeshow and other industry events.

Warren hopes to remain a vital part of this industry to help welcome the next generation. "I would love to continue to be able to attend as many events as I can and get out there and talk to people," he says. [SBI](#)

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